

December 18, 2020

The Care Foundation
1121 SW Salmon St
Portland, OR 97205

Dear Students,

Below is the requested information for Lines for Life's CommuniCare grant application in support of YouthLine's Safe Social Spaces Project. The YouthLine's innovative and powerful Safe Social Spaces Project reaches out to our most vulnerable youth – those who voice suicidal ideation and self-harm online through social media apps, and offers them resources, safety planning, help, and hope.

a. Organization's History

Lines for Life's mission is to prevent substance abuse and suicide and to promote mental wellness. We are a statewide non-profit, that provides services to individuals struggling with substance abuse and suicidal ideation. This is achieved through 24/7/365 crisis lines operated by highly-trained volunteers and staff. For 20 years, Lines for Life has operated a peer-to-peer youth crisis line, called the YouthLine. Our youth volunteers (ages 15-21) receive 64 hours of mental health and suicide prevention training so they can engage in conversation via phone, text, and chat, and teach suicide prevention curriculum in classrooms across Oregon.

b. Accomplishments

Lines for Life has a successful track record of using innovation and training to address the growing mental health needs of youth and other at-risk populations.

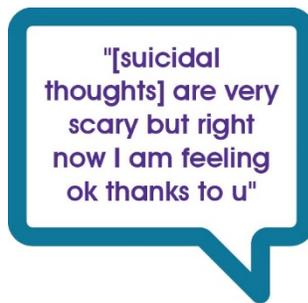
- YouthLine was deemed an essential service by Governor Brown in March 2020 which allowed students in Portland and Bend to continue to volunteer on a weekly basis at Lines for Life headquarters.
- COVID-19 brought many challenges for the YouthLine, including a surge in calls from a TikTok influencer that caused 250 calls, texts, and chats in one night.
- Portland and Bend volunteers answer crisis calls, texts, and chats from every state in the country.
- We were honored in 2019 by the American Association for Suicidology (AAS) with the AAS Award for Crisis Center Excellence and Innovation.

c. YouthLine's Safe Social Spaces Project

"Thinking of killing myself soon, what is the point in this at all?" "Someone please talk to me." "My cuts burn so I can't sleep." These are actual quotes YouthLine's Social Media Monitor has found online. Since our project began in 2019, we have reached more than 480 youth in danger, and have conducted four rescues, avoided eight suicides, and prevented 22 self-injuries. We know there are more youth in danger than ever before who are publishing their thoughts online who don't know how to get help, and through our safe social spaces program, we are trying to find them and get them the help they need. This program has allowed our YouthLine counselors to connect with teens online who are in danger and in desperate need of our services. With the added stressors of COVID-19, social media is a crucial outlet for many youths, making this unique service more essential in the months ahead.

Youth suicide is now the number one cause of death for youth ages 10-24 in Oregon and number two in the United States. YouthLine, a service of Lines for Life, was founded in 1999 by high school students who were hoping to learn how to help peers in crisis. Now, it is a national program with over 146 youth volunteers that helps over 28,000 youth across the country. Every day our youth volunteers help youth who struggle with a myriad of mental health issues including: self-harm, bullying, LGBTQ+ issues, anxiety, suicide ideation and those who are actively suicidal.

In order to grow YouthLine's Safe Social Spaces Project, we propose to use funding from CommuniCare to increase the number of staff who monitor these apps (from 0.5 to 2.5 FTE). The more time we spend monitoring social media sites, the more teenagers we can help.



d. Expected Outcomes

YouthLine serves teenagers and youth ranging in age from 10-24 across the state of Oregon and around the country. Since our project began in 2019, we have already served more than 480 youth to date. In addition, we have conducted four rescues, avoided eight suicides, and prevented 22 self-injuries. By expanding the program, we could easily be talking to over 100 youth online a month (triple the average of 35 currently). The goal of increasing the number of staff for our project will allow our YouthLine to reach more youth, provide resources, normalize talking about suicide and mental health, and above all, save lives.



480
**Contacted
480 Youth**



8
**De-escalated 8
suicidal youth**



205
**Message-Based
Support and
Safety Planning
with 205 Youth**



22
**De-escalated 22
youth considering
self-injury**



480
**Referred 480 Youth
to Resources**



4
**Conducted 4
Rescues**

e. Amount Requested

- \$5,000

Thank you for your consideration for this request. If you have any questions, please contact me at sharlenev@linesforlife.org or 503-244-5211.

Sincerely,

Sharlene Vance

Sharlene Vance
Development Coordinator